

Amendments

In the Claims:

The following listing reflects amendments to the claims and replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in this application.

1. (Currently amended) A method for detecting hepatitis C virus in a biological sample comprising the steps of:

contacting said sample with an ~~anti-human~~ anti-human IgG Fc antibody attached to a solid phase and at least one monoclonal anti-hepatitis C virus envelope protein antibody that reacts with an epitope of hepatitis C virus E1 and/or E2, under conditions that allow an immunologic reaction between said antibodies and said sample; and

detecting the presence of immune complexes of said antibodies and said envelope protein, wherein detecting said immune complexes indicates the presence of hepatitis C virus.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Currently amended) The method of claim ~~2~~ 1 wherein said solid phase is selected from the group consisting of microtiter plates, paramagnetic particles, and paramagnetic beads.

4. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein said at least one monoclonal antibody reacts with an epitope selected from the group consisting of an e2 conformational epitope, an e2 linear epitope, an e2 linear neutralizing epitope, an e1 conformational epitope, an e1 linear epitope, and an e1 linear neutralizing epitope.

5. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein said at least one monoclonal antibody reacts with an e2 conformational epitope, an e2 linear epitope, an

e2 linear neutralizing epitope, an e1 conformational epitope, an e1 linear epitope, an e1 linear neutralizing epitope, or a combination thereof.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein monoclonal antibody is detectably labeled.

7. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein said anti-human antibody is contacted with a primate polyclonal anti-hepatitis C virus envelope-protein E1/E2 antibody prior to contact with a biological sample.

8. (Currently amended) A method for detecting hepatitis C virus in a biological sample comprising:

contacting an anti-human IgG Fc antibody attached to a solid phase with a primate polyclonal anti-hepatitis C virus envelope-protein E1/E2 antibody;

contacting said sample ~~to~~ with said polyclonal antibody;

contacting said sample with at least one detectably-labeled, monoclonal anti-hepatitis C virus envelope protein antibody that reacts with an epitope of hepatitis C virus E1 and/or E2, under conditions that allow an immunologic reaction between said antibodies and said sample; and

detecting the presence of immune complexes of said antibodies and said envelope protein, wherein detecting said immune complexes indicates the presence of hepatitis C virus.

9. (Currently amended) A method of screening blood components or blood for hepatitis C virus prior to the use of such blood or blood component to prepare blood products comprising:

reacting a body component from a potential donor with an anti-human IgG Fc antibody attached to a solid phase and at least one monoclonal anti-hepatitis C virus envelope protein antibody that reacts with an epitope of hepatitis C virus E1 and/or E2, under conditions that allow an immunologic reaction between said antibodies and said body component;

detecting the presence of immune complexes formed between said antibodies and hepatitis C virus envelope proteins; and

discarding any blood or blood component from said donor if said complexes are detected.

10. (Currently amended) A kit for detecting hepatitis C virus in a biological sample comprising:

~~an~~ a mouse anti-human IgG Fc antibody;
at least one detectably labeled monoclonal anti-hepatitis C virus envelope protein antibody that reacts with an epitope of hepatitis C virus E1 and/or E2;
control standards; and
instructions for use of the kit components.

11. (Original) The kit of claim 10 further comprising a primate polyclonal anti-hepatitis C virus envelope protein E1/E2 antibody.

12. (Original) The kit of claim 10 wherein said anti-human antibody is attached to a solid phase.

13. (Currently amended) The kit of claim 10 wherein said monoclonal antibody reacts with an epitope selected from the group consisting of an e2 conformational epitope, an e2 linear epitope, an e2 linear neutralizing epitope, an e1 conformational epitope, an e1 linear epitope, and an e1 linear neutralizing epitope.

14. (Currently amended) The kit of claim 10 comprising a plurality of monoclonal antibodies which react with an e2 conformational epitope, an e2 linear epitope, an e2 linear neutralizing epitope, an e1 conformational epitope, an e1 linear epitope, an e1 linear neutralizing epitope, or a combination thereof.

15. (Cancelled)